

My name is Ellen Wilson and I have been a resident of New Milford for nearly eighteen years. I have never given or sent testimony for a hearing before but feel so strongly about the issues being decided that it is time to speak out.

I urge you to vote to ban gestation crates for the obvious reason: they are inhumane. No animal should be confined to a pen so small they cannot even turn around and that is utterly devoid of mental stimulation.

I also urge you to vote in opposition to H.B. 5080, which would allow bow and arrow hunting on Sundays. It is inhumane and the public has a right to one day of the week knowing that they can enjoy the outdoors without having to be concerned about their safety.

Lastly, I hope you will vote in favor of an immediate ban on the sale of commercially-bred dogs in new pet shops, and a phase out of their sale in the sixteen pet shops in Connecticut that currently sell them. The standard of care required under the federal Animal Welfare Act is so minimal that the regulations are more standards for survival than for humaneness. Because the priority at commercial dog breeding facilities, A.K.A. "puppy mills", is a quick profit, little concern is given to the health or quality of the animals being bred. What matters is that the puppies are the offspring of same breed parents, regardless of their health. This mass production of purebred puppies with little concern for the dogs and minimal cost to the breeder results in unsuspecting pet store customers who buy puppies fated to have a lifetime of health problems.

When I was a child, my mother was a hobby breeder. We had perhaps four or five litters between our two females over the course of a few years. Although that was many years ago, I still remember the talk about finding a stud with good bloodlines in order to ensure quality puppies. Legitimate breeders care about their puppies. They interview and spend time with potential buyers to ensure that their puppies are going to good homes. Breeders like this, ones who care more about the puppies than the profit, do not sell to pet stores.

In January, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed a bill that enables local municipalities to enact and enforce their own laws governing commercial dog breeding facilities. It gives them the right to require pet shops to only sell dogs that have been properly raised and do not come from puppy mills. This is not only a victory for the humane treatment of animals, but it decreases the chance that consumers will unknowingly buy a poor quality puppy that will end up costing a lot of money in veterinary bills over the course of its life.

Similarly, this month the Chicago City Council voted 49-1 to ban the city's pet stores from selling dogs, cats or rabbits obtained from large-scale breeding operations. All such animals sold in the city will have to come from government pounds, rescue operations, or humane societies.

These measures being taken in New York, Chicago, and other cities will serve to decrease the homeless pet population and decrease the number of pets being euthanized each year. Puppy mills are a main cause of the problem and our towns and cities are left to deal with the results... and the costs associated with them. We should follow the lead taken by other cities and stop enabling the commercial dog breeding industry to contribute to the problem of the overpopulation of dogs.

Respectfully,

Ellen Wilson
New Milford

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